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19 October 1961

NOTE FOR THE DIRECTOR

SUBJECT: Turkey's Electoral System

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The ability of the Justice Party to win a plurality of seats in the Senate while the Republican People's Party (RPP) won a plurality in the lower house was due to the fact that the House is elected by proportional representation in each district. In the Senate, the party winning the largest number of votes (majority or plurality), in each district takes all the seats. Most electoral districts in Turkey are alloted more than one seat in both the lower house and the Senate, with the number in both cases depending on the population of the district. Thus urban and rural votes are roughly equal in value. In elections to the Senate, a party winning enough districts by small margins, can lose other districts by big margins and still obtain a plurality of seats.

This is apparently what the Justice Party did, and its plurality of Senate seats probably is based on a smaller share of the popular vote than the RPP gained. In addition, the Justice Party evidently did better in certain urban districts than once appeared likely.

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